

JAMES RIVER AND KANAWHA CANAL.

MEMORIAL

OF

THE LEGISLATURE OF KANSAS,

ASKING

That, as a national enterprise, the James River and Kanawha Canal be enlarged and completed in such a way as to connect the navigable waters of the Ohio and James Rivers.

JANUARY 27, 1873.—Referred to the Committee on Commerce and ordered to be printed.

The legislature of the State of Kansas to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, respectfully represent :

That in accordance with a suggestion made in the annual message of his excellency James M. Harvey, governor of the State of Kansas, and which is as follows:

The rapidly extending railway system meets the demand of the public for the purposes of travel, and the transportation of the lighter and more valuable commodities, even for great distances; but it is a well-ascertained fact that grain, for instance, cannot be profitably sent by rail to a distant market. It is demonstrable that transportation by water is vastly cheaper than is possible by railway. This being the case, it behooves us to look for some water-line whereby we can cheaply place our heavy products upon the Atlantic sea-board for distribution there or transmittal to foreign marts. There exist, it is true, routes via the Missouri, Mississippi, and Illinois Rivers, the Illinois and Michigan Canal, the great lakes of the north, and the Erie Canal and Hudson River, or the Welland and Lachine Canals, of Canada, and the Saint Lawrence River. The objections to these routes are that they are very circuitous, that they involve the cost of many transshipments, and the payment of tribute to Illinois, the Dominion of Canada, and the State of New York. Moreover, they are closed by ice during a large portion of the year, and rendered dangerous and doubly expensive by tempestuous weather during the season when it is most desirable to move crops; nor can these routes be used without passing through or along the borders of the dominion of a foreign government, thus making their use contingent upon amicable relations with that government. There is also another route reaching the Atlantic by water via the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers to the Gulf of Mexico, thence through the Florida Pass to the ocean; but this route has nearly or quite as many objections as the northern ones through the lakes. This line is also a very long one, and it passes through a climate quite unfavorable to the preservation of most of the products of this latitude. Transshipment at the Gulf is also necessary, and the dangers of navigation in the vicinity of Florida Keys and the Bahama banks are so great, that insurance on voyages that way ranges as high as 2½ per cent. on the value of vessel and cargo.

It is the duty of the national legislature to see that a route is provided from the interior to the sea, which will not tax the labor of the workingman 75 per cent., simply to furnish transportation for the resulting product. In view of these facts, and others, which furnish reasons equally cogent, I deem it eminently fit and proper that you

should memorialize Congress asking that, as a national enterprise, the James River and Kanawha Canal be enlarged and completed in such a way as to connect the navigable waters of the Ohio and James Rivers, thus affording means of transit by water from the navigable streams of the interior to the Atlantic Ocean, without the necessity of transshipment, and without risk from climate, tempest, or alien enemy, and at a cost for transportation vastly less than that which is entailed upon us by the inefficiency of the present lines of communication.

Our geographical situation should interest us in the prosecution of this work, for when it is completed barges may be loaded at Leavenworth, Atchison, Wyandotte, or any point on the Missouri River, or upon the Kansas River, if some improvements be made for its navigation, and the barges thus freighted could be towed by steam to the head of navigation on the Kanawha River, thence passed through the canal as canal-boats to tide-water in Chesapeake Bay, whence access is easy to the best markets, both foreign and domestic. The barges could be returned to the West freighted with such commodities as may be in demand here. It seems to me that the opening of such a line would greatly enhance the value of all our domestic products, and cheapen such articles as we find necessary or desirable to bring from a distance. As a consequence of these advantages the price of real estate would be greatly advanced and labor made more productive.

I make this suggestion not unmindful of the facts that it is our duty and interest to produce or manufacture everything that we can profitably, and that manufactures of many kinds are being established within our borders, yet the capabilities of this State for production are so great that we must ultimately look to distant markets and devise ways and means to place our products there safely and economically. It is to the interest of all, whether engaged in production or traffic, that this be done, for whatsoever adds to the prosperity of consumers increases demand in proportion as the power to purchase is augmented. Additions to the revenues of farmers, manufacturers, and traders enable them to employ professional men and laborers at an increased remuneration. Thus are all benefited by the easy and cheap transit to the best markets of those commodities which are necessary to the comfort and convenience of mankind.

the following is submitted: Of all the modes of transportation for heavy and bulky freights none compare with that by water transportation for cheapness, and the growing necessities of the West is to obtain some cheap and expeditious route from the valleys of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, and intermediate points, to the sea-board of the Atlantic, and which shall be open the year round for the transportation of grain and produce of these countries. For the purpose of this transportation the central water-line through Virginia and West Virginia appears the most feasible. Its description is as follows: Beginning at the mouth of the Kanawha, 284 miles below Pittsburgh, the central water-line contemplates the improvement of the Kanawha for about 89 miles, so as to give a channel of sufficient width and depth at all times for steamboats and barges; thence for a distance of 119 miles further the stream is to be made navigable with locks and dams. This brings the improvements to the western base of the Alleghany Mountains, where the canal proper commences, which extends from thence 272 miles to Richmond, and from thence ship navigation of about 125 miles reaches Hampton Roads, near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. This improvement will form a continuous water-line from the Ohio River to Hampton Roads, a distance of about 605 miles, when it reaches one of the finest harbors on the Atlantic, both the harbor and the outlet to the ocean having sufficient depth to float the largest ships, with easy egress and ingress to and from the ocean, and being always free from obstruction. The States west of the Mississippi, including Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, and the States west of these, with portions of Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, and Kentucky, would have easier access to the markets by the way of James River and Kanawha Canal than by any other route, all things taken into consideration.

The benefit of cheap transportation accrues to the producer, and the surest way to encourage commerce is to give the West a cheap highway to the sea. This route affords not only the cheapest highway between the granary of the country and its market-place in peace, but in war it offers inland lines of communication which no enemy can cut. Such

works of improvement in their way are calculated to provide for the common defense and promote the general welfare of the entire country. By the way of the Mississippi, Gulf of Mexico, and Florida Pass, there is danger not only from the heat of summer to grain and produce, but in times of hostility there will be danger from the enemies' cruisers from the mouth of the Mississippi River to New York, or some destination farther away. Besides, this route will require a voyage of 3,500 miles from the place of production to the wharves of New York, when, with completion of the Virginia route, it might be shortened to one-third that distance, with a safer inland water-route under our own control to the very sea. But objections to the route by the way of lake, river Saint Lawrence, and its gulf, are still more formidable. The way is not our own, but such as others may overlook and at pleasure dispute and endanger, if not forbid. Yet this neighbor upon the north is fast at work making this route as convenient and feasible as possible, with the hopes of being able to do our carrying trade of the West. The people of Canada are pushing forward those works which are necessary to increase the capacity and facility of this route, expecting thereby to reap the advantage above referred to. The routes, both by lake and gulf and Saint Lawrence, lie beyond our own borders; and what great nation was ever known to allow its chief highway of commerce to pass beyond its own borders, to depend for safety upon the forbearance of foreign powers, when by the expenditure of a sum quite within its means a shorter, better, cheaper, and perfectly safe way may be opened entirely within its own borders? It is true that there is a route by way of the lakes and Erie Canal talked of and in use, but it cannot do one tithe of the business required by the West, while a portion of the route is closed by the frosts of winter five months in the year; and much more of this route would be by canal, and pay tolls to the State of New York, than would be by the Central Virginia route. The more lake and river transportation, and the less canal, the cheaper the freight. We must look for the route that has the most natural water transportation, and that is in the climate where the frosts of winter do not linger in the lap of May. Nor can the produce of the West be carried over extensive railroad lines. Such transportation is more expensive than any other, beside its entire inadequacy to meet the demands of the country. Good authority has said: West of the Missouri River, from Sioux, Omaha, Leavenworth, and Kansas City, there is a country extending for hundreds of miles still farther from the Atlantic, with immense capacity for the production of wheat and corn, beef and pork, which must either remain uncultivated or be furnished by some better and cheaper outlet. The vast regions, too, west of the Upper Mississippi must remain valueless as a grain-producing region, though of almost boundless capacity for the small cereals, unless a less costly route be furnished to market than the one by railroad, or even by railroad and lakes. But let us compare the difference in price of freight by railroads and water-communication. We will take the two great competing lines of the New York Central and the Erie roads as an average of what such roads can do. From the official reports of these roads for the year 1866, the rates per ton per mile charged for that year were as follows:

New York Central, per ton per mile, 2.92 cents; or for the whole distance from Buffalo to New York, the sum of \$12.85, or at the rate of 35½ cents for a bushel of wheat.

Erie Railroad, 2.45 cents per ton per mile, or for the whole distance from

Erie to New York, 460 miles, the sum of \$11.27, or for a bushel of wheat, 34½ cents.

Taking the thirteen principal roads of New York, and the average of charges is about 2.78 cents per ton per mile.

The conclusion arrived at by a convention held in New York, representing the principal railroad interests of the United States, was, that railroads for ordinary transportation of freight and passengers cannot be constructed and operated at a lower charge than 2 cents per ton per mile. It is stated on reliable authority that freight can be carried over the lakes on long voyages for 2½ mills per ton per mile, while it can be carried in barges by river navigation at 3 mills per ton per mile.

The average charge per ton per mile for ten years on the New York Central was 2.60 cents, while on the Erie Road for the same time it averaged 2.20 cents per ton per mile.

We will now take the most expensive water transportation and compare it with the railroad transportation for the same time.

The average charge by the twelve canals of New York per ton per mile for the same time was 9 mills, nearly one-half of which were tolls, and this can be reduced by competition and yet pay at the rate of 6 mills per ton per mile, or about one-fourth of the railroad charges. The distance from Leavenworth City, on the Missouri, to Hampton Roads is about 2,000 miles, about one-fourth of which will be by canal or river improvement, paying tolls. The balance of the route will be over lines less than one-half the cost of canal transportation, and consequently less than one-sixth the cost of railroad transportation. Over this central route through Virginia by water our heavy produce can be carried to the sea-shore for about one-sixth it can be by rail.

To recapitulate :

By lake navigation, when the distance is great, produce can be transported per ton per mile for	2½ mills.
Ry river transportation, per ton per mile.....	3 “
By canal, per ton per mile.....	9 “
By railroad, per ton per mile.....	2¼ cents.

From these evidences, which will not deceive, then, if we would have the producers of the West thrive upon their own labor, we must establish a cheap water communication with the sea, whereby we can reach the great markets of the world. At present we have not lines enough to carry the freight; hence we receive no benefit from competition. The only inland water-line by which the Mississippi Valley can be connected with the ocean, so as to have at all times and under all circumstances, in peace and war, a convenient and unmolested highway to the Atlantic sea-front, leads through Virginia; and until the country avails itself of this highway there is no protection in war for western commerce, and farmers there must console themselves as best they may under the reflection that they are cut off with their produce from commercial intercourse with the great markets of the country, and from the highway of nations. It is clear that the water-line through Virginia, in the language of General Washington's letter to Governor Harrison, is the shortest, easiest, and least expensive communication with the invaluable and extensive country west of the Alleghanies. It has been said by a distinguished engineer of another country that “the commerce of the Northwest is not any fanciful speculation, nor is its magnitude in any way questionable. It is a reality, as inquiry will establish. It has outgrown the Erie Canal; and the complaint of the West is, that the quantity carried is so immense that carriers can command their own prices. The condition of the producers of the West has been described, without

exaggeration, as that of men shut out from the markets of the world, oppressed by the excessive production of their own toil, which remains wasting and worthless upon their hands, depriving labor of half its reward, discouraging industry, and paralyzing enterprise. In many localities the produce is even without value, for it is without market.

It is estimated that 500,000,000 bushels of Indian corn or maize are raised in the Northwest, but not 5 per cent. of this amount finds its way to the sea-board, owing to the expense of getting it there; and that out of 60 cents paid in New England for a bushel of corn, only 9 cents goes to the producer, the remainder being expended in freights and commission. In 1836 the construction of a canal was begun, 5 feet deep, 30 feet wide at the bottom, and 50 feet at the water-line; of this, some 200 miles, costing the State of Virginia over \$10,000,000, is now in use, leaving something over 100 miles yet to be finished, but it should be enlarged for the whole distance. And it is understood that all that has been done on State account will be relinquished if the General Government will make the enlargement and complete the work as a free highway for all the States. This canal should never be suffered to fall into the hands of a corporation, nor should it be controlled by State or States; one reason of this will be more obvious, when we reflect that the West has already paid to the State of New York more than \$50,000,000 for canal-tolls alone, being in addition to the freight. As the benefit of completing this line of transit by water through Virginia will accrue to a great portion of the people of the whole country, thus making it of national importance, it becomes a great work for the benefit of the people by the General Government thereof. For the purpose, therefore, of obtaining such aid from the General Government as the magnitude of the project requires for its completion—

Be it resolved by the house of representatives, (the senate concurring therein,)

1. That the communication by water between the valleys of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, by way of the Ohio, Kanawha, and James Rivers, to Norfolk, Virginia, by means of certain improvements, is a national work of vast importance to the whole country, and particularly to the grain-producing States of the West and Northwest, from which the East draw their supplies.

2. That our Senators in Congress be instructed, and our Representative be requested, to use their best efforts to obtain such aid from the General Government as will insure the early completion of the above-mentioned line of water communication.

3. That a copy of these resolutions and memorial be forwarded by the secretary of state to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and to each of our Senators and Representative in Congress.

I, W. H. Smallwood, secretary of state of the State of Kansas, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original instrument of writing on file in my office.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed the great seal of the State. Done at Topeka, this 17th day of January, A. D. 1873.

[SEAL.]

W. H. SMALLWOOD,
Secretary of State.

